

The HARPSICHORD



Dr. Alice Ehlers
Harpsichordist

FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, 1973

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HARPSICHORD

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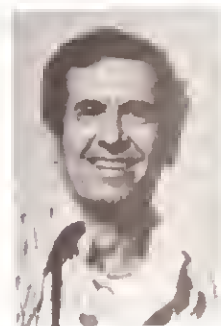
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GO FOR BAROQUE

by *Hal Haney*



The cover for this issue features an informal, candid portrait I took during an interview with the remarkable harpsichordist Dr. Alice Ehlers. At our very first meeting she filled the room with her warmth and kindness. She immediately made me feel as if we had always known each other as good friends. I wish you could have been there with us because it was an experience one would remember for a lifetime. The story of this visit and our conversation starts on page four.

Thanks to all of you who have sent in your renewals for 1973. It is very gratifying to all of us. We all owe a special "thanks" to our Contributing and Sustaining Members. Every one of them who was up for renewal at this time, renewed. That's 100%! Our Sustaining Members pay \$100 to \$249 per year and those who have renewed this year are Dr. George Sargent, Allison Park, Pa.; Patricia Bowman, Seattle; Dr. Harold Bretz, Chicago; and David Way of New York City. Contributing Members pay \$25 to \$99 per year. Those who renewed this year are John Stokes, Princeton; Gertrud Roberts, Honolulu; Thomas Hood, Tallahassee; John T. Gotjen, Warren, R.I.; David Gooding, Cleveland; Ray and Helen Ellerman, Harrisonburg, Va.; Richard B. Earle, Center Conway, N.H.; Rev. Ronald W. Dahlheimer, Minneapolis; Albert B. Cranwell, Florence, Alabama; Maurice Ben Stad, Philadelphia and an anonymous contributor who lives in San Francisco. A new Contributor joins this illustrious list with this issue. He is Charles E. Tramposh II of Pacific

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Beach, California. We are all very grateful for the help of these special members and I am sure the entire subscribing membership joins with me in thanking them for their generosity. The confidence they have placed in us and what we are trying to do is deeply appreciated.

A number of members have indicated concern for the fate of our office which was in the path of Press housing for the 1976 Olympics. Now that the games will not be held in Colorado it looks as though we can hang on here a little longer. However, new low-cost housing is still being considered so the building may come down yet. I feel certain that if it does, it won't be for some time so we are safe. The Art Department still gets so cold that the water pipes under the sink have frozen twice this year already and that's *inside*. The wall heater (which runs 24 hours a day) puts out only about 1 B.T.U. per day so we bought a little electric heater from Wards which works great as long as we stay in front of it. Such is life at I.H.S.

The conversation with Dominique Jones in the last issue (*Vol. V, No. 4*) created more furor than all the other conversations put together. Some members were delighted with the article and wrote to tell us about it. Others were offended and they also wrote. The magazine was not in the mail more than a week before the letters started pouring in. While I can't answer each one of them with an individual reply, I do sincerely appreciate the time and effort everyone spent in expressing his thoughts. About half of the letters were for Miss Jones and about half of them opposed her views. I found Miss Jones to possess a charming and interesting personality and I thought members would like to spend a few moments with a non-professional harpsichordist. I'm glad so many of you did enjoy it and I apologize to those who were offended. Excerpts from some of these letters appear on page 18.

This year marks the 40th anniversary as a performing harpsichodist

for I.H.S. member Gertrud Roberts. Each year she travels from her home in Hawaii over to the mainland to give concerts in many cities and towns in the United States. Her reviews continue to be outstanding. I think one of the most poignant is a 9-word statement from Kimio Eto, Japan's foremost blind Koto artist. After hearing her play he said "... Tell Mrs. Roberts I have been in a temple." A beautiful 36-page booklet has been published featuring Mrs. Roberts and 17 large photographs which were taken during various memorable concerts and recitals throughout her 40 year career. The cover is in full color and shows Mrs. Roberts seated at her large Challis harpsichord which was decorated by the noted modern muralist Jean Charlot. Members who want to obtain information about booking Mrs. Roberts into their community during her next visit to the mainland may contact her at 4723 Moa Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816.

Good news is in store for members who want to improve their playing on the harpsichord, recorder, baroque flute, oboe, gamba, cello, guitar or organ. Seven Master Classes will be held in which these instruments will be heard and studied. Alan Curtis, the American harpsichordist and Frans Bruggen the Dutch recorder and baroque flute virtuoso are presenting a joint 7-day seminar in Berkeley, California starting March 23. Professor Brueggen teaches at the Royal Conservatory, The Hague, and Professor Curtis teaches at the University of California Berkeley. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to study under these two important artists. Costs and other details of this event are to be found under the heading *Festivals Seminars and Classes* on page 20 of this issue.

Last week I was fortunate in being able to spend an entire day with Scott Odel, restorer for the musical instruments collection of Smithsonian Institution and also have lunch with John Fesperman, Curator of the Division of Musical Instruments.

Both of these gentlemen are in-

deed gentlemen in the fullest sense. While I came at a very busy period of the year, they were unstinting of their time and enthusiasm. I saw the "behind the scenes" operation of this huge museum and met some of the people who make such an institution possible. The entire staff of the Division of Musical Instruments is devoted to their work and are very much aware of the responsibility they have to future generations who will come to study the instruments and documents they have preserved. Mr. Odel and his unique work will be featured in one of our future issues.

One of the highlights of the visit to Smithsonian was being permitted to play some of their rare instruments. This included the beautiful 1617 Boni Virginal which was featured in Volume V, No. 1 of *The Harpsichord*; the 1743 Shudi 2-manual harpsichord with its rich, singing bass and the glorious Benoist Stehlin harpsichord, made in Paris in 1760. All this in one day! Just seeing these instruments in person was a wonderful experience for me, but to actually get to play them was undreamed of. While these instruments are visible to the public, they are, of course, not available for playing by the casual museum visitor. However, they can be heard being played by professional artists in concerts in the museum at various times during the year.

Just before leaving Washington I was able to visit the Library of Congress. This collection now totals more than 85 million items which fill 320 miles of bookshelves. While I was very much impressed with this fantastic wealth of knowledge and information, I was more impressed when I looked in their card catalog under *Harpsichord*. The very first card in that section read: "*Harpsichord, The*; quarterly journal published by International Harpsichord Society, Denver, Colo. Volume I, No. 1, 1968. Copies on file in Dept. of Music."

HLH

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CONVERSATION with Harpsichordist *Mme. Alice Ehlers*



Meeting the warm, gracious and talented Mme. Alice Ehlers is an experience that can only be called memorable. Her quiet charm and assured personality have developed through many years of association with other greats of the music world. Born in Vienna, Austria in 1887, the daughter of Ignatz and Caroline Pulay, her love of the harpsichord and its music has

moved both the famous and the unknown in many countries of the world and through many eras. The Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, fifth edition gives the following brief outline of Mme. Ehlers life:

"Austrian harpsichordist. She was a pupil of Leschetizky for the pianoforte in Vienna, but later studied the harpsichord for five years with

Wanda Landowska at the Berlin High School for Music. She soon took an important place in the modern revival of the harpsichord by reason of her fine taste as a solo performer, accompanist of recitative, and teacher. Her tours in Europe and America were directed to propagate the performance of 17th and 18th century music on the instrument for which it was written, the harpsichord, in a wide repertory based on Bach, Handel and Scarlatti. At the Worcester Festival of 1935 she brought forward a Concerto by John Christian Bach and took part in the performance of the St. Mathew Passion as continuo player."

How very little that entry by H. C. Colles even hints of the wide talents of this remarkable woman and her brilliant career. The awards and honors she has received in the United States alone is very impressive. These include an Honorary Doctor of Music degree from Lewis and Clark College, a Walker Ames Professorship from the University of Washington, Honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Cincinnati and the first Brittingham Professorship of Music of the University of Wisconsin. On her eightieth birthday, in 1967, she received a special Merit Citation from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, a Merit Award from the University of Southern California School of Music Alumni Association and the Distinguished Service Medal of the German Republic which was presented by the German Consul. The South Bay Chamber Music Association honored her by establishing the Alice Ehlers Young Musicians Performance Fund during the same year.

Bjarne B. Dahl, restorer of early pianofortes and harpsichords, had worked on her Pleyel for a number of years and it was through him that

I learned that Mme. Ehlers was living a quiet life in a small town outside Los Angeles. Since he did not have her address, I had to search further. In checking our I.H.S. records I found five or six of her former students who were members so I wrote to all of them. Through that correspondence, I was able to locate her remarkable and charming daughter, Maria Ehlers. Through a series of letters and telephone calls an appointment was set up and half a day was set aside for meeting, interviewing and photographing this remarkable woman, Alice Ehlers. Because of space limitations, the interview which follows only touches lightly upon the incredible life of this exceptional woman. It is planned that an entire book will be written about Alice Ehlers, but for now, spend a few precious moments with her in the livingroom of her California home as she shares some of her memories.

MME. EHLERS: My early music training started in quite an ordinary manner. I studied piano when I was very young. Mother had no interest in music but my father was very interested. This was in Vienna where I was born. My father attended every concert of importance although he did not play an instrument himself. He took me to many of the concerts and operas and I developed a natural love for fine music. It was always around me. One of my piano teachers was Richard Rohert, also the teacher of George Szell and Rudy Serkin. Gustav Mahler conducted many of the concerts and even my first harpsichord relates to Mahler, but we'll cover that later.

My student days were like most student days. As students, we loved music but none of us had any money. We would stand through operas, studying the score throughout the entire performance. One of my closest friends then was Alban Berg. When I attended Schoenberg's class in harmony Alban helped me a great deal. He was in the same class, as was von Wehern. At this time I knew nothing of the harpsichord.

Gradually, I became very much

interested in the harpsichord and concentrated on it. Naturally I fell in love with it. When you go into something deeply, you can't help it. You fall in love. This was many years ago and I was one of the very first to introduce the harpsichord to the public. To bring it out of the past.

HANEY: *Did your meeting with Landowska start everything?*

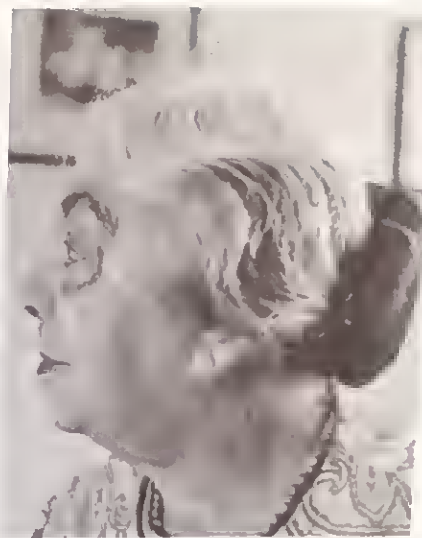
MME. EHLERS: The meeting with Landowska had something to do with it. She was my teacher. I enrolled as a student at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin in 1909, studying piano. Landowska started teaching there in 1913 and I started studying with her immediately. I was her very first harpsichord pupil. She was a great personality and I admired her very much and rightly so. I really haven't found anybody since who had this spirit of greatness. I wouldn't say greatness of character because character was not her strongest asset. She breathed a wonderful life, a wonderful vitality into everything she did.

Why are you so interested in her?
 HANEY: *It is a part of your beginning and gives us a chance to know some of the people who contributed to your career from the start.*

MME. EHLERS: I see. I studied with Landowska for as long as she taught at the Hochschule and I was a student there. I admired her immensely and we were quite under her spell, as most young students are of great personalities. It is so long ago that I have forgotten much. So many other things came into my life.

HANEY: *What happened after you left Landowska?*

MME. EHLERS: I made myself independent and started concertising. This was only after I left Landowska. Strong people have a grip on their students that often makes it difficult to develop in your own way. I never lost my admiration for her . . . this was steady . . . but I was no longer under her grip. I became independent. I really must say that I started to develop only after I made myself independent. It is very true that when you are under the influence of a great personality you



tend to climb back into yourself. This is what happened to me. From the moment she left the school, I started to develop. That is a terrible thing to say, but it is the truth. She was a very wonderful woman and with all my admiration, I felt I did not develop until we had parted.

HANEY: *Harpsichords were very rare during those early days. Do you remember the first instrument you owned?*

MME. EHLERS: I don't, at the moment, remember the maker's name, but it wasn't a very good instrument. I do remember that I purchased it under rather unique circumstances.

Gustav Mahler was the original buyer. He wanted it for the opera house, but it wasn't what he expected. I was the only one playing harpsichord at that time and I played the instrument for him a number of times. But even though we tried many different combinations, he never liked it. He wanted a big tone and a lot of sound and, of course, the harpsichord was not able to produce that type of sound. Mahler became disenchanted with the harpsichord and had it taken into the basement of the opera house where it was stored along with discarded scenery and other unwanted articles.

I thought nothing about it at the time, but later, when I decided to buy an instrument, a friend told me about a harpsichord which was tucked away in the basement of the Paris opera

house and that I could probably buy it very inexpensively.

It turned out to be the same instrument which I had played for Mahler and which he didn't like. It must have been reasonable, because I bought it. That was my very first harpsichord.

From that time on, I gave concerts and recitals and, along with Landowska, introduced the harpsichord and harpsichord music to our part of the world. Landowska and I were the only people playing harpsichord professionally. I traveled much more widely than Landowska did, since after arriving in America, I introduced the harpsichord through western United States and Landowska stayed mostly in the New York area.

HANEY: *When your career was just getting started did you have any trouble finding music?*

MME. EHLERS: No. Not at all! There was much more music than I could ever use.

HANEY: *Your friendship with Dr.*

Albert Schweitzer covered many years. Could you tell us about that?

MME. EHLERS: Well, it was a long time ago, if you can imagine. He had an enormous influence on me. I still insist that he was one of the greatest men I have ever met in my life. He influenced me without trying to influence me. Our friendship lasted for nearly 40 years, right up until the day of his death. When I was a young girl, he called me Cembalinen and he continued doing so throughout the rest of his life. No one else ever called me this. In fact, I wouldn't have accepted it from other people. He was a wonderful and kind man. I don't know whether this will make sense or not, but he never pushed me. He always stood outside. Yet his influence was enormous for me. And still it is to this day. He was living in Gunsbach then. Later he went to Lambarene and traveled back and forth a number of times throughout the years. I visited with him often and lived in his house in Gunsbach while he was in Lambarene.

I can't say I studied formally with Dr. Schweitzer, but since I was in his house he would sometimes correct my playing. Everything he said made so much sense . . . so much more sense than some of my teachers. I am most grateful that I had his influence. Later in my life, I gave recitals to raise funds for his hospital. One recital is especially memorable to me.

It took place in Boston and I was honoring his 85th birthday. He couldn't attend the recital since he was in Lambarene at the time, but he calculated the exact hours, translating them into Lambarene time, so that at that moment, he could be with me in thought during the time I was playing. While I learned much from him, it was not from teacher to student, but from friend to friend.

HANEY: *Since you have taught many harpsichordists who are now located all over the world, what advice do you have for beginning students. What are some of the things a student should*



have before starting a harpsichord career?

MME. EHLERS: First of all, one must have a great love for the instrument. Harpsichord playing does not come easily. It takes a lot of work. A lot of devotion. I have always had a lot of devotion for the instrument and its music. I was fascinated with the harpsichord from the very beginning.

The instrument I have with me here in California is the instrument I have had most of my life. It is about 50 years old, yet it continues to respond. It is a Pleyel and has been through so many trials it is a wonder it is here at all.

This Pleyel has been everywhere.* It was no pleasure to travel with this instrument, or any instrument this size. My English was much poorer than it is now and I was always misunderstood. I remember a shipping problem on my first tour in America.

This was a very important concert for me and when I got off the train my harpsichord was no where around. I stood on the platform and tried to communicate my problem to workers who spoke only English. Finally, it was discovered that my Pleyel had been put on another train, some type of cargo train, and it would arrive shortly.

When it finally came, they opened the door and nothing got out but pigs. Hundreds of pigs. They had put my Pleyel in a cattle car with the pigs. Well, it had been cold, and the pigs had snuggled up to the harpsichord to keep warm. As a result, they kept the harpsichord warm during the trip and it was in excellent condition for the concert.

* A recent IHS interview with Mile. Denise Restout, Landowska's secretary and companion, indicates the possibility that this instrument might have originally been owned by Wanda Landowska and that it was sold to Mme Ehlers through another party. Ehlers mentioned that she bought it at a reduced rate from a Mr. Chlapert of Pleyel who had promised to find her a good instrument at a reasonable price. This was in '27 or '28 so it could have been one of Landowska's early instruments. The finish of the instrument is not original. Mme. Ehlers was invited by Curt Sachs to play the "Bach" harpsichord from Kothen which had a red interior and, being impressed with that harpsichord, Ehlers had the interior of her instrument refinished in red. Her artist-sculptor husband Alfred Ehlers then indicated to her that the red interior did not look too well with the mahogany exterior so he finished the exterior in antique green.

The instrument has been all over. It was carried on camel back when I played in Egypt and Israel. Once it was nearly dropped in the harbor. The boat was docked rather far from shore, and they had to bring it in while hanging from a large crane. It had a leather strap type of thing wrapped around it and there it dangled out in the open, at a very high altitude, and over the water. You must imagine my feeling, for here I was, watching my precious harpsichord being swung in the air from a big cable and me not being able to speak with the workers since I did not know their language.

HANEY: *Your experiences include knowing and working with many famous musicians. You knew and played with Hindemith, could you elaborate on this relationship?*

MME. EHLERS: Hindemith was difficult. He played viola and we played together, but it was not very good, I must say. It is a shame that one doesn't take notes at the moment to help in remembering things later on. One thinks you will remember and that you don't have to write things down, but that is a mistake. One should write things down. If I should start again, which I won't do because I am much too old to start again, I would do it differently. But you asked about Hindemith.

I had a great admiration for him. He was a wonderful musician. He was also a difficult person, but because of this, I owe him a great deal. His influence was very strong and direct.

HANEY: *How did he get along with Landowska?*

MME. EHLERS: Not at all. Not at all. She was very high strung and nobody could do anything without her wishes and in accord with her will, so many of the great musicians got tired of this. I remember finding it difficult to believe that anyone would leave Landowska to study with someone else. I admired her and respected her talent so much that I didn't believe anyone would do this, but they did.

HANEY: *How was she as a teacher?*

MME. EHLERS: No teacher. No teacher. This I now know, of course,

since I teach myself. Landowska never knew how to teach. She, herself, could do what she wanted. She was a wonderful player and could play anything, but she could not teach. She never explained anything and one could not question her. During those early days all of us wanted to ask, but we held her in awe and were afraid of her. Much later, I decided that she did not know how to teach. She did not try to develop her students. We could not come out and she did not help us to come out. She was a very strong and great personality and I was a beginner and had every reason to be very modest. I had the feeling she was not proud of me, as I am always proud when my students play. I don't let my students play unless I can be proud of them. Also, I believe Landowska felt a great competition with her students and did not encourage them to progress as far as they might have otherwise. I always thought it was the job of the teacher to help the student progress as rapidly and as far as possible. She did not do this. I believe my debut in Berlin illustrates the point clearly.

Landowska had worked very hard with me in setting up this program for my debut. My big number was the Bach F Minor Concerto. This was a big moment in my life and I worked on it for a long time. This was my first professional appearance in Berlin. The music critics and the public would be waiting to hear whether I was a harpsichordist or not. Then the day before my recital, or perhaps it was two, Landowska gave a recital.

It was also in Berlin and she also played the Bach F Minor Concerto. Of course she played it beautifully. She was the master. But how was I to follow this greatness with the same concert in the same city? How was I to face the public and the press?

I would never do this to a pupil of mine. Never. I don't know whether my shock over this showed up in my playing that night but I hope not. The write-ups turned to be better than I expected so that helped out. The point is that I was just at the beginning of

my career, and she was already in the middle of her career, which is a great difference. I needed all the encouragement I could get.

HANEY: *After this recital, did you then go on to other cities and other concert halls?*

MME. EHLERS: Yes. Yes indeed. Concerts, I must say, came easily to me. I was somehow blessed. Because I didn't do a thing to promote myself. I didn't write letters and I didn't call on people, but these offers came to me. And now I touch wood since this has been going all through my life. I had it easy, and I still do. In fact, on my 80th birthday, that was half a dozen years ago, I did a television broadcast with harpsichordist Malcolm Hamilton.

HANEY: *Musically speaking, have you established any strong likes or dislikes?*

MME. EHLERS: As much as I admired Hindemith, I never really liked his music. He never composed for the harpsichord, but perhaps I discouraged him. It's strange that he didn't try because his music is so linear. As far as texture, it is not too far away from Bach. Of course, Bach has been my greatest love. This love has been strong with me from the very beginning when I started playing.

As a child I first gravitated to Bach. And through all these years, I

have never found an explanation as to what impressed me so much. For me, it was the only kind of music I loved and was interested in. It could, perhaps, be the fact that Bach's music has such order. And this was the opposite of me as a child. I was, by nature, very sloppy, so Bach's orderliness had a great influence on me. More than any teacher. And this is true today. It goes through my entire life.

I played Bach everywhere. I was possibly the first harpsichordist to introduce the complete Goldberg Variations to the west coast of America. Of course this was a long time ago. I remember I was asked to play the Variations in a very large hall, but I thought the hall was too big for the harpsichord, so we moved the recital to a smaller room. So many people had to be turned away, I suggested they be told to stay for a second recital. After I played the complete Goldberg, the hall filled up again and I played them all over again. The newspaper writeup said "Mme. Ehlers encores with the Goldberg Variations!"

HANEY: *After a recital, do you ever wonder if you could have done better?*

MME. EHLERS: I don't wonder. I know. I know when I play well and I know when I do not play well, so I have no riddles before me. Also, I never had the talent to tell myself

that something was good when it was not. I am very blunt with myself. When I don't play well, I could be told a hundred times that I played beautifully and I wouldn't accept it.

HANEY: *Are you pleased that you have many former students who have continued and grown as harpsichordists?*

MME. EHLERS: Yes and no. If they are good, I am pleased. If they are not good, I am not pleased and in fact very disappointed. You see this always comes back to me. If they are not good, I feel that I have let them down somehow. This is not always true, I know, but that is how I feel. Sometimes it is the person and they don't have the drive or perhaps talent to go very far. Students do come back to me from time to time to visit and receive help. Sometime people call on the telephone for advice, but I refuse to accept these calls. You see, nothing can come out of a telephone call. You can't give a lesson over the telephone. If it is not important enough for them to come personally, then it is not important at all. First of all you can't treat all people alike. Some students, I feel, have a kind of conception and I can let myself go and talk with him or her and they will know what I mean and it will make sense. But sometimes you talk and it is like talking to a piece of wood. For this, my time is too important.

Landowska didn't teach as I teach. With her we always listened. With her I listened with six ears when she played. In my mind she still remains the greatest harpsichordist I ever heard. I listened intensely.

HANEY: *Do you teach your students also to listen?*

MME. EHLERS: I start them with listening. To make them imitate me does not make sense. First of all they must learn to stand on their own feet. Secondly, they must learn to discriminate as to what is good and what is not good. The one rule I learned for teaching, is that there is no one rule for teaching. You can demand from one person something which you know he can do. You know he is ready to



do it. With another student, you can not demand this progress, for he is not yet ready. There is no recipe or formula. I start students with making them dig and think and discover. Some students shine from the beginning. And when that happens, I feel blessed. The best example of that is Malcolm Hamilton. I am especially proud of him. I was really blessed the day he came into my life. That was about 19 years ago and we are still very close to this day. I am a very direct person and am poor in going around in circles. I think one should get to the point. With Malcolm Hamilton, this was possible right from the beginning. And we have never had a fight or quarrel in all that time. It will be 19 years this April, since it was April of 1954 that I went to Seattle to give a Master Class and he came to me at that time.

HANEY: *When you first started teaching, there were almost no harpsichord teachers around. Did you feel you were very much alone in your field?*

MME. EHLERS: In a way, but it all developed so naturally. I am by nature an out-going person and I want to share my knowledge and my talents. To have someone come to me who wants help, and wants to use my knowledge and experience, and learn from me, this inspires me.

I have been teaching ever since I was a student. In fact, while I was studying with Landowska, Landowska's students would come to me for help. I would prepare them for their next lesson. While I have enjoyed both teaching and playing concerts, I do believe teaching means much more to me than the public appearances. Of course, one of the disadvantages of concerts is the traveling. Especially with this big instrument. The experience became especially tragic when the harpsichord didn't arrive. This happened a few times.

Some of the countries I visited had very primitive transportation and since I didn't speak the language, that made it even worse. Because of this, I never left my instrument alone. I went with the instrument when it was

loaded to go to the station, I stayed to see that it was loaded on the right train and I was there when it was unloaded. I never let it get out of my sight. You can't rely on anybody when your instrument is being shipped. If I am ever reborn, I don't think I will come back as a traveling harpsichordist. It is too difficult. Perhaps I'll play the flute or some instrument I can tuck under my arm. Sometimes, when I think back, I wonder how I had the courage to go through with it. I was very young at the time and I always traveled alone. I had to travel alone out of practical reasons. Shipping the instrument cost a fortune and it was not practical to ship the instrument and pay expenses for a companion to accompany me. Probably one of my most frightening experiences came when I was asked to go to Russia to play.

My agency back then was Wolff and Sachs, I don't know whether they are still in business any more or not. But when I got the notice to play in Leningrad I wondered how I could ever do it. I did not know a word of Russian, and it was so very far away. Then I discovered that we would have to change trains in the middle of the trip because upon leaving Poland and entering Russia the tracks change size and I had to make sure my harpsichord would be changed along with me and my luggage.

My fears and fright were unfounded, for everything went smoothly. The Russians took care of the changes and had people to meet me when we changed trains, and when I arrived in Leningrad. It was bitter cold and dark when we changed trains, but I went back to the baggage car just to make sure they unloaded my harpsichord, then stood on the platform and watched it loaded into the next train. The transfer went well and my instrument arrived with me. There was no problem. However, something did happen right after the concert which surprised me.

As far as I know, I was the first harpsichordist to appear in formal State concert in Russia. Landowska

may have played in public concert when she visited Tolstoy, but she did not mention it. In any event, my Pleyel did create a great deal of interest and after my concert, a rather large group of people come up on the stage to examine the instrument. One man who was smoking a cigar leaned over and a hot ash fell and landed on a string. The string immediately broke. The strange thing is that that one string is the *only* string that has ever broken on this instrument in the 50 years I have owned it. In all its travels and its hundreds and hundreds of tunings, not one string has ever broken, except that one string in Leningrad and that could not be considered under usual circumstances. It is a miracle. One must speak kindly of my harpsichord. It has treated me very well. It was so cold in Russia that I thought the instrument would not sound at all, and yet it did not complain. It responded beautifully and the concert was a wonderful success. I was really given an ovation. The State Commissioner was there as were other State officials. I was very excited with the success of it. Then another wonderful thing happened.

Of course I knew no one in Leningrad and did not speak the language so I was rather alone. But then, so far away from home, who should I meet but my good friend Otto Klemperer! Here he was in Leningrad to conduct a concert. How beautiful is a friendly face which appears among strangers in a strange country.

My career then led me all over Europe. I played in Frankfurt under the direction of Herman Scherchen, in Holland under Van Beinum and also Willem Meigelberg and in The Hague under Van Otterloo. There were so many that it is difficult to remember them all. Of course I played with Klemperer and Bruno Walter, and in this country with Ormandy I played the Biber Biblical Sonatas with Paul Hindemith. He had realized the figured bass.

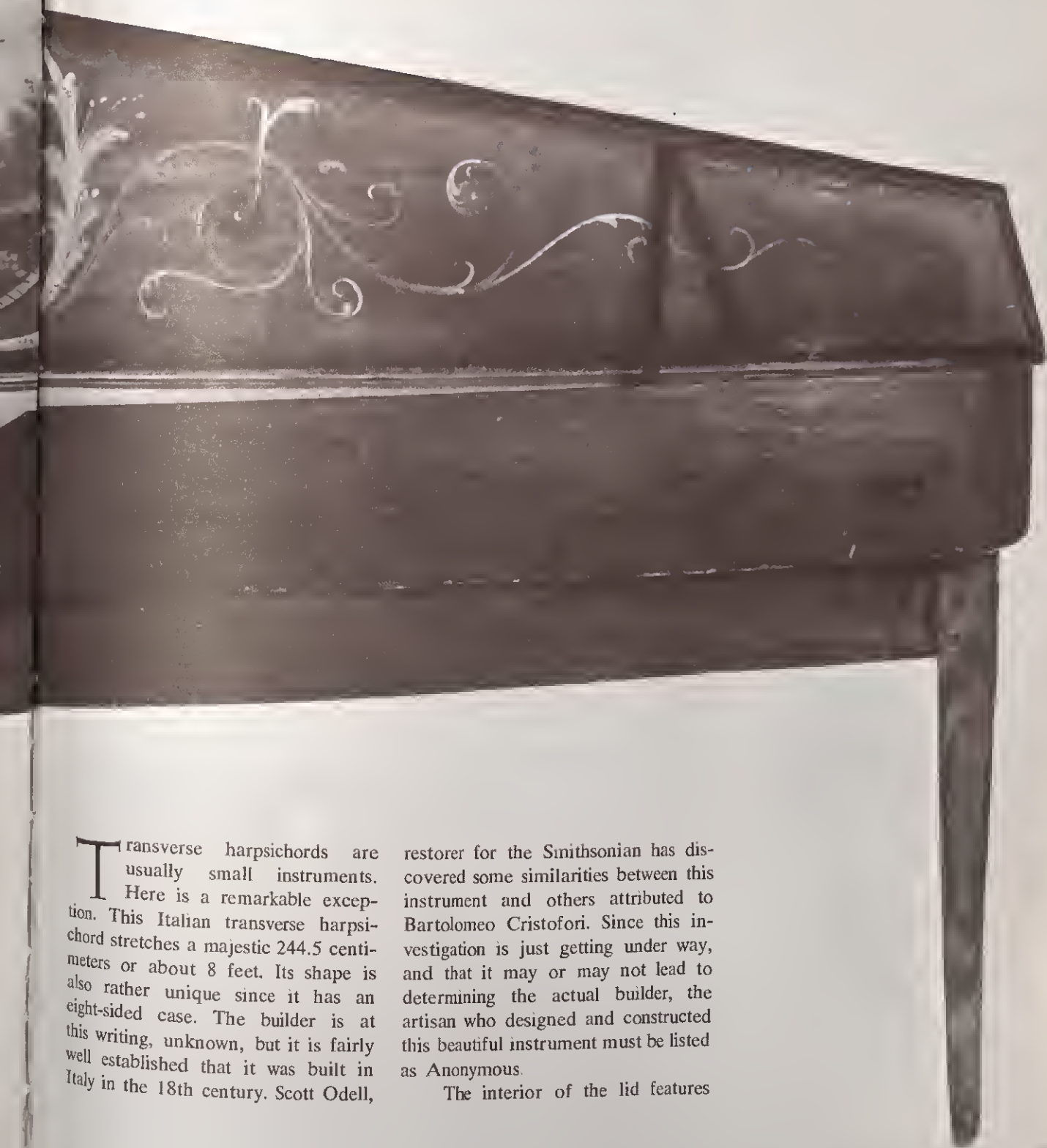
HANEY: *What brought you to America?*

(Continued on page 17)

HARPISICHORD

of **N**OTE





Transverse harpsichords are usually small instruments. Here is a remarkable exception. This Italian transverse harpsichord stretches a majestic 244.5 centimeters or about 8 feet. Its shape is also rather unique since it has an eight-sided case. The builder is at this writing, unknown, but it is fairly well established that it was built in Italy in the 18th century. Scott Odell,

restorer for the Smithsonian has discovered some similarities between this instrument and others attributed to Bartolomeo Cristofori. Since this investigation is just getting under way, and that it may or may not lead to determining the actual builder, the artisan who designed and constructed this beautiful instrument must be listed as Anonymous.

The interior of the lid features



a typical Italian-style landscape in a cartouche which is surrounded by ornamental scrolls. The scene is an idyllic one of mountains, rose-tinted clouds, shimmering lake and a man and woman linked arm in arm. The entire scene is back-lighted which gives a warm glow to the painting. Italian artists delighted in painting dramatic scenery and quite often even formal portraits of social, religious or state leaders would be shown in front of an endless expanse of beautiful (albeit fictional) scenery.

The keys are beautifully designed and built. The naturals are of boxwood with arcaded fronts. The accidentals are capped with ebony. A diamond shaped mother-of-pearl inlay has been set into the front of the accidentals and a rather curious, small ivory button or finial has been inserted at the back of the key near the name board. Whether this is only decorative or has some function is a matter for conjecture.

The compass of the instrument is from FF to e3. Both FF sharp and GG sharp are omitted. There are two choirs of strings, one 8' and one 4'. Both the 8' and 4' nuts are located on the soundboard. The 4' strings pass through cut-outs of the 8' nut. The 4' jacks are located in front of the 8' jacks. The keys are mortised and moving the keyboard permits a selection of various string combinations.

When the keyboard is pushed all the way in, the 8' choir of strings is engaged. When pulled halfway out, both the 8' and 4' choirs of strings are engaged. Pulling the keyboard all the way out engages only the 4' choir of strings and they can be played solo.

The tuning pins are placed in the usual position, between the keyboard and nuts, with the exception of the top 13 notes of the 8' choir. These pins are located almost in the middle of the instrument, separated from the other tuning pins and to the right of the keyboard. These can be clearly seen in the photograph on this page if one follows the outer case from the keyboard to the right. They are located near the 90° angle which

is found near the center of the instrument.

The jacks are of the usual open top design. One jack can be seen lying between the tuning pins and the front of the case to the left of the keyboard.

The case is made of poplar while the molding and soundboard are made of cypress. The 4' and 8' bridges and the 4' nut are made of beech, while the 8' nut is made of walnut.

The following measurements were made by Helen Hollis and Dorman Smith with additional information supplied by Scott Odell and Sheridan Germann. (All measurements are in centimeters)

Length overall (less moldings) 244.5

Case depth (less moldings) 19.9

Case width (Spine to treble end of keyboard projection, less moldings) 72.0

Keyboard Measurements

Approx. key length overall

Bass 47.5 Treble 25.8

Approx. key length, front to bal. point

Bass 19.2 Treble 10.0

Keyhead length 3.6

Accidental length 8.2

3-octave span 48.0

8' string length, plucking point

FF 206.6 17.2

C 183.3 16.3

c 111.8 13.5

c¹ 55.3 10.8

c² 26.5 8.8

c³ 13.1 6.8

4' string length, plucking point

FF 124.2 8.7

C 99.9 8.2

c 50.3 6.6

c¹ 26.1 5.0

c² 15.5 3.5

c³ 7.6 2.5

While the instrument is unplayable it is generally intact. It was received by Smithsonian as a gift on March 17, 1960 from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science in New York. Because it is currently under investigation and examination it is not part of the instrument collection which is open to the general public.

HLH

THE SUBJECT IS ROSES



This rose, designed and made in '67 by Haney & Golikoff, appears on the soundboard of a small, ornate, Italian style single 8' instrument. The actual rose is made of pierced metal. The surrounding metal rim is from the tail light of a wrecked Ford automobile. Both the rose and ring have been covered with 24-karat Italian gold. The surrounding design of abstract vines and grapes (which forms the initials of the owners) is made of paper-thin reproductions of various woods including birds-eye maple, mahogany, cherry, golden oak and black walnut. The cherubs are gold with sepia and umber shadows and are two-dimensional. Three-dimensional carved gold cherubs antiqued with sepia and umber, surround the outer case and embrace the legs. The dot and diamond design is made of wood reproductions highlighted on two sides with 1/16" brass tape which gives a 3-dimensional effect. The roses being scattered by the cherubs are decoupage and are also in tones of gold, sepia and umber.

HINTS

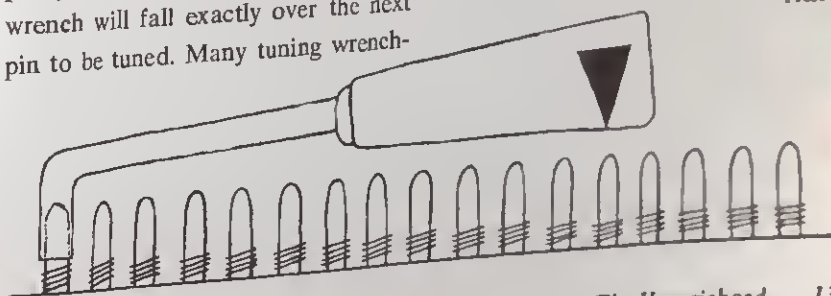
ON FASTER TUNING

Considerable time is wasted during tuning in finding the tuning pin which is exactly one octave above or below the string just tuned. This time loss can be reduced to a minimum by marking the handle of your tuning wrench with a file or nail polish so that an imaginary line dropped from this mark will point to the tuning pin located one octave above the pin on which the tuning wrench is resting.

To rapidly find a pin which is an octave lower, place the mark over the pin just tuned, and the head of the wrench will fall exactly over the next pin to be tuned. Many tuning wrench-

es have a decorative groove or two turned on the wooden handle. In some cases these grooves are located the exact distance between tuning pin octaves. When tuning, keep the tuning wrench handle over the pins (or close to them) and by using the line-of-sight method outlined here, you will soon find your tuning time measureably reduced.

HLH



The Harpsichord — 13



Photo by James Shade

By Richard Jones

An informal talk delivered at a weekend seminar on performance style for recorder, viol, and continuo players in Southern California.

First of all, let me say that I am pleased to be speaking with all of you in your role as ensemble players. It has been my experience over many years that recorder and viol players have been the first to recognize and value harpsichords that are now commonly referred to as "traditional or historical" in character. I think this has come about because you have approached the instrument simply on how well it fulfills its function as continuo and not with regard to grandiose specifications or other paraphernalia. In many respects I believe you have been the builder's severest, most honest critic and his best encouragement.

I have been asked to share some of my thoughts about the future viability of the craft of harpsichord making and in what direction present trends may be taking us. In order to do that, it is probably not amiss to reflect briefly on where we have been in the remarkably short period since the effective beginnings of the revival. The whole of this period can be roughly divided into two phases: the first was characterized by an initial burst of rather non-discerning enthusiasm for the literature and the instruments, and the second, in which we now find ourselves, characterized by

ECLECTIC STYLE IN THE MODERN HARPSICHORD

by Richard Jones

the development of highly specific knowledge about the instrument and its tonal parameters. Two personalities best represent both the strengths and weaknesses of the first phase: the equally irrepressible Landowska and Arnold Dolmetsch. Their vigorous advocacy, an essential stimulant during the first phase of the movement, was coupled with an almost complete lack of knowledge of both the technology of building the instruments and of the musical aesthetic characteristic of the instrument in its historical role. The result, in the case of Landowska's association with the Pleyel firm (which had never built harpsichords as had other French firms such as Erard), was an instrument predicated on the only available knowhow: that of piano manufacture. Massive over building, metal frames, and heavy stringing resulted in a remarkable instrument whose chief affinity to the harpsichord of the past was that the strings were plucked. This concept of applying piano styles of construction has dominated the greater part of the revival and, indeed, is still pursued by several of the world's largest producers. Arnold Dolmetsch, on the other hand, had a far greater awareness of the historical model, and he incorporated more traditional aspects into his designs and approach to performance style. A kind of antiquarian enthusiasm, often of a poetic, rather than specifically descriptive type, was pervasive. In preparing these notes, I looked over a bibliography I had compiled in the early 1950's about plucked keyboard chordophones. Most of the considerable volume of entries represented this approach. Even the serious investigators such as Canon Galpin and A. J. Hipkins have little to tell us about the specific nature of the historical model. The beautiful Philip James catalogue of the Victoria and Albert collection

perpetuates this style. Not until the appearance of the excellent Nicholas Bessarabof catalogue of a Boston collection did this kind of writing and illustration become specifically descriptive. The correlation between harpsichords as elegant antiquities and their use as actual models for the builder had not yet been effectively made.

The first phase had reestablished the instrument in the mind of the public and performers; the second, pushed by a wave of long playing recordings of the literature has reestablished the real nature of the instrument. A growing body of practicing musicians, scholars, and enthusiasts had begun to detect a wide divergence between the evidence of historical commentary about the instrument, the internal evidence of the music, and musical results of the then available instruments. A series of works began to appear delineating the historical instruments, such as the Bessarabof catalogue, the works of Donald Boalch and Raymond Russell, and culminating in the definitive work of Frank Hubbard. The instruments were restored and copied and a true picture of the timbre, resonance, characteristic attack and decay was developed: in short, the aesthetic of the harpsichord as a legitimate musical voice was clearly circumscribed.

Which brings us to the present. What are we to do with our new found knowledge and understanding of the instrument? Are we about to be semantically constricted by such widely used terms as "traditional and historical" with a resulting *reductio ad absurdum* of perpetual copying of a currently fashionable historical model? Will we be confronted in 1984 with an authorized institute of "Ruckers' style" harpsichord building? I think not. Fortunately for the future of the craft, the very nature of harpsichord

makers tends to exclude them from the ranks of mere copyists. It may well be noted that one of the presently most copied of the historical builders, Taskin, was a notable innovator and did much of his work in "improving" and "modernizing" the instruments of the past. It's my observation that most builders have an active mechanical curiosity and inventiveness coupled with a quality of rugged individualism which consistently leads them to attempt new means and methods.

The use of the word "eclectic" in my title is meant to suggest this process of the integration of a variety of means to achieve the now known end of the characteristic harpsichord aesthetic. My own experience with the eclectic approach stems from the work of my teacher, Wesley Kuhnle, whom I believe, a number of you may have known.

In the 1940's his pioneering research into the historical performance style led him to make empirically based tests of framing styles, scales, stringing patterns and plectra materials, virtually none of which were related to historical norms. In many cases, he succeeded in realizing his search for those qualities of articulation and characteristic of tone production so notably lacking in the first generation of revival harpsichords.

As Whitehead has pointed out in another context, the first step in the death of a vital idea is its ritualized repetition. I believe that an eclectic approach will retain and expand the vitality and musical validity of the harpsichord by the application of a variety of construction means and techniques for achieving the now understood parameters of the tonal resources of the natural instrument. I do not, of course, have reference to any artificial means of amplification or tonal modification. Indeed, we are not without exponents of great distinction in this style of building at this time. One has only to think, among many examples, of the rich results of the unique framing methods of Eric Herz or the brilliant application and execution of metal framing by Frank Rutkowski.

Yet the craft has not and, I think, will not enter the mainstream of modern musical commerce. The harpsichord has proven to be peculiarly resistant to modern marketing methods and, particularly, to handling by middlemen, a seller intermediary between the builder and the buyer. The temptation to apply commercial methods to the craft has proven irresistible to the American temperament; and, as a consequence, we have had a number of costly and conclusively convincing failures. The chances are that, in the future, you will still be buying your harpsichord directly from the maker.

The tonal parameters have been delineated; the techniques are known. Except for a few practitioners of preciously arcane antiquarianism, I believe that the craft is vital and contemporary and ready to function effectively in the future.

I would be happy to hear any questions you might have on any of the subjects covered.

STUDENT: *Can anything be done with my Neupert spinet to give it more punch for continuo?*

JONES: Probably not, unless part of the problem is excessively worn plectra. I do not think there is any practical modification that will make this type of instrument speak more loudly or pungently. We have recently been requilling a lot Wittmayer and Neupert type instruments with Delrin. This works surprisingly well but only yields a very slightly greater degree of articulation or brilliance.

STUDENT: *When is somebody going to make a good, really portable, spinet for continuo with small groups?*

JONES: I have been trying for a long time and not yet succeeded. The only really portable small instruments I know of are the Dolmetsch spinet and the Neupert Spinetino at 4' pitch which has its own traveling case. For a variety of technical reasons, making a good small instrument is infinitely more difficult than making a good large instrument as well as the psychological difficulty that most makers find, of course, greater satisfaction in a more imposing product. I am trying and, hopefully, others will also.

STUDENT: *You seem pretty cool about the instruments. Have you gotten bored with harpsichords?*

JONES: Probably not in the sense you mean. You must remember that I have practiced this craft every day for the past twenty years as my sole means of livelihood. Those of you who have worked at a job for twenty years running will appreciate the chilling effect this has on spontaneous enthusiasm. What you are talking about, I think, is the kind of enthusiasm I reserve for wines, about which I'll be glad to talk passionately for the rest of the day.

STUDENT: *You seem to be knocking historical instruments. I have built a Hubbard kit and am very satisfied with it.*

JONES: As you should be, it is an excellent instrument. No, what I am chiefly trying to emphasize is that we should not become bogged down in anachronism at this stage of the revival. The "grand ravelment" might have been considered a hideous violation in its time, but the craft was then vital and it was simply an effective updating technique. Needless to say, the people who set the historical norms we now treasure were not themselves copyists.

Editor's note: A full length interview with Mr. Jones, America's most prolific harpsichord maker, will appear in a future issue.

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REPORT FROM THE LEONHARDT MASTER CLASS

By Thomas F. MacKnight

A Master Class in the music of Louis Couperin and Johann Jakob Froberger was conducted by Gustav Leonhardt at Dunns Tew, Oxford, England from August 2 to August 12, 1972. It was arranged by the prominent English instrument maker David J. Rubio. (Three Rubio French doubles were provided for the class) I attended as one of the five participating students.

Leonhardt's discussion and demonstration of principally the D minor and F major suites of Louis Couperin disclosed to us the remarkable imaginative subtlety of these works. The *preludes non mesures* have tentative, exploratory passages as well as passages of melodic activity which often have the characteristic four note phrase of the first melody in the big D minor prelude phrased two by two. He advised us to keep the active parts active and the tentative phrases tentative. He pursued this idea also in discussion of the dance suites. By keeping clear the contrast between deliberate rhythmical indefiniteness (so indefinite that at times it cannot be at all decided just where a particular beat occurred) and very marked rhythmical activity (characteristically with many downbeats) the dance movements have their great charm. One must understand the function of all the penned notes as well as the arpeggiation implied, since Louis Couperin's imagination can take an entirely new tack within the space of three measures, and often does. The performer must perceive this change of character in the music and see how each note functions to prepare for it. The old concept of good and bad beats (i.e. in 4/4, beats 1 and 3 are good) which get good or bad fingers has a direct bearing on what we could call the articulations which do quite a bit to make the 17th century music live.

The final result of the performer's effort must have some definite

character which the performer has found in the music. A similar point was often made about Froberger's toccatas.

They were composed to produce a musical effect of such immediate dramatic expression, such flamboyance, that they must not only sound improvised, but they should almost sound as if the drama of the moment overcome the need for musical order.

In these remarks Leonhardt was making a subtle point about the fugal sections of the toccatas. The idea was that the fugues don't exist as it were in spite of the extravagances that may precede and follow them. The toccatas are a unity, and some relationship or progression of moods or of character was put in them for the perceptive performer. The articulations and rhythmic accents in the fugue give it the character which holds the toccata itself together as an expressive unit.

Perhaps I should stop here.

But I will mention that Leonhardt showed us one extremely useful technique which he calls "overlegato." This is the technique of using the decaying feature of the harpsichord sound as a dimension of performance by holding certain notes or certain groups of notes for a very long time into the following beats.

For example, hold the dissonant note of a *port de voix* into the resolution. As another example, hold down the three thirty-seconds before a quarter note in a toccata. When used with taste, this technique makes legato more smooth and can make the perceived dynamics of a piece more subtle.

In conclusion, here is a practical detail for those who play the Louis Couperin Chaconne in re mineur and have been wondering how to play the third measure as written without re-tuning. Louis Couperin had the short bass octave and so he had no problem. The answer is that one must release the tenor E at a moment when no one will notice that it is gone, in order to change fingering and hand position in the left hand.

MORE ON THE 4' CLAVICHORD CHOIR

About the "four foot" on clavichords. (*Vol. V, No. 4, pg. 12*) It isn't a 4' in the sense that a harpsichord uses a set of octave strings to brighten the entire ensemble. Clavichords work within extremely narrow limits. It is difficult to get a decent tone out of a tangent above e', and impossible without compressing the keys to the left. In the bass, the key considered as a lever gives great advantage to the finger versus the string, even with an angled balance rail, so the bass notes have an increasingly spongy feel which is only partly overcome by shortening the tails of the bass strings by bringing the hitchpin rail down the left side. The heavier strings in the bass make some compensation for the extreme fore-shortening of the scale, but the inevitable result is a progressive simplification of the bass tone due to loss of upper partials (in harpsichords the bass tones can be actually richer in partials due to management of the plucking point and relief of downbearing by back pinning and high hitchpin rail). So the addition of the octave strings to the bass of a clavichord serves two purposes . . . it replaces the lost upper partials, making the bass more of a piece tonally with the treble; and the extra string improves the feel of the bass by adding more resistance to the key just at the point when the advantage of the key lever on the balance rail has gone over to the finger.

The octave strings do *not* give the effect of adding a 4' choir in the bass only . . . the strings are much smaller, and the weight of the octave strings is managed so that the blend is imperceptible . . . although you would miss it if it weren't there.

Musically the advantage was that in contrapuntal passages going into the bass the same quality of tone could be carried down the scale.

David J. Way
Zuckermann Harpsichords
New York City, N. Y.

MME. ALICE EHLERS

(Continued from page 9)

MME. EHLERS: That was a long time ago. I arrived in 1936 to play a concert at the Library of Congress and I gave other concerts also. I returned to Europe for two years and then came back to America to teach a summer class at Juilliard School of Music in New York City. My daughter was living in California at the time, and so when I visited her, I fell in love with America and especially California, so I stayed. I had not planned to stay, but I did and am now so very happy I made that decision.

HANEY: Was this about the time you made your appearance in motion pictures?

MME. EHLERS: Yes. It was very early, I believe in 1938. I don't remember exactly how it happened, but I had appeared on the Bing Crosby radio show which was broadcast all over America. My daughter knew people in Hollywood, and it was shortly after that that I was asked to appear in the film "Wuthering Heights." That's the first time I met Sir Lawrence Olivier. He was in the picture. It was a very exciting experience

for me. I had never made a film before and it was an exciting time for me. I played the harpsichord in the film in a large ballroom scene. While making the film was fun, it also opened a lot of doors for me. Before the film I was not too well known in America, but after the film, I stood out as someone who was special. Later, I started teaching at the University of Southern California's School of Music and I have been there up until just a few years ago when I retired.

HANEY: *Some months ago, I was visiting with harpsichordist and harpsichord builder Claude Jean Chiasson and he told me a wonderful story about you. He said that a large crowd gathered to hear one of your recitals and as the time approached for the concert to begin, you were nowhere to be found. Everyone was worried because you were always prompt and on time. Just as they were getting ready to send out a search party, you arrived, out of breath, and rushed on stage to the applause of your happy audience. You stood silently until the applause calmed down and then apologized for your tardiness and asked*

them to forgive you, but hoped they would understand. Then with tears of happiness in your eyes, you told them that you had been late because you were taking an examination and you had passed, and that at this moment you were now a brand new citizen of the United States. Did this really happen?

MME. EHLERS: I don't remember what I said, but it is true that I had a concert to do on the very day of my citizenship examination. I had studied very hard for this test because I wanted to pass it so badly. When I got before the judge who was giving the test and he found out I was a harpsichordist he became very interested in the instrument and forgot to ask me all those questions about the constitution and the presidents and the things I had studied. I was working under a handicap since my English was not very good and I had to search for each word but it all came out all right and he passed me. America is a wonderful place I thought, and each year of my life I have held that thought with me and I give thanks that I made that decision to call America home.



The Harpsichord — 17

LETTERS

Dear Hal,

As always the arrival of a new issue of *Harpsichord* is welcome in Greeley. However the Nov-Jan, '72-'73 issue contains some amazing contrasts. After reading the interesting transcription "Music and Modernism," what are we to think of the inane diatribe by Dominique Jones? Miss Jones' understanding of many musical points is most feeble.

We are, for instance, told that "Kirkpatrick's book is based primarily on the premise that Alessandro Longo mixed up all the numbers . . ." in Scarlatti's music. Has she really read this book? Its premises are certainly not so limited. She is uncertain as to whether the Venice and Parma manuscripts are in "numerical order." It goes without saying that they are. If, however, she means chronological order, doubtless we all would like to know the answer. Kirkpatrick's argument that the Venice manuscript is chronological is strong, however Giorgio Pestelli and others have attempted datings based on stylistic procedures. Miss Jones implies that she thinks Longo's numbering is chronological. One may, without fear of contradiction, observe that Longo's numbering is arbitrary. Longo did not claim otherwise. The K. numbers are at least based on a frame of reference which is contemporary to Scarlatti.

When musical judgments are made we are on even worse ground. According to Miss Jones K.37 (L.406) "is structured similar (sic) to Beethoven." Rubbish! This movement employs structural devices (ritornellos) and textures (slow harmonic rhythm and homophony) most commonly associated with Italian concerto practice (Vivaldi). Yet she also refers to it as "fantastic Spanish activity!" We are presented the startling information that Scarlatti uses "two against three almost like Brahms," who can in no way be considered Spanish. As for

"two against three," Miss Jones would seem to be in need of some elementary study in Baroque notational practice.

I cannot identify the work which is called L.116. Its K. number is 518, and not "a low number." Perhaps L. 136 (K.61) is intended. If so we may observe that this work is a most characteristic keyboard styling. In it one does not find it "very easy to hear the Vivaldi structure." Miss Jones implies that she is some variety of expert in stylistic dating of Scarlatti's works ("you can tell the development"). How? Is she familiar with Pestelli's similar effort? Is she familiar with Joel Sheveloff's excellent dissertation on Scarlatti? If she possesses such knowledge she should submit it to the scrutiny of the musical world.

When the harpsichord is discussed, Miss Jones' attitude is simple: "just because you can't find it doesn't mean that it didn't exist." The desire to be capable of "pulling stops in and out very fast right in the middle of something" does not make it right either musically or historically. I have examined Baroque harpsichords in which two minutes would be necessary to make a registration change! Perhaps Miss Jones needs to read Hubbard, Russell and James. Perhaps she needs to read her own library of materials on Scarlatti. Wishful thinking is no substitute for truth.

As chance would have it, Kirkpatrick's argument against a 16' stop on a probably Scarlatti instrument is not as strong as it could have been. Kirkpatrick allows that the largest instrument in Queen Maria Barbara's collection may have had a 16' stop, and was perhaps of Spanish origin. His reasoning is understandable. The instrument in question had four sets of strings, five registers, an ebony and mother-of-pearl keyboard, and a case of walnut. Now if one is primarily aware of instruments patterned after the fraudulent "Bach" instrument at Charlottenburg, it is logical to assume a fourth set of strings to be at 16'.

However if one is aware that Bull, Dulcken and other eighteenth century Flemish builders constructed instruments with four sets of strings of which three were unisons, and one an upper octave, one possesses a counter-argument of some strength. As for the fifth register, we may note that an eighteenth century Flemish instrument at Brussels Conservatory (initials H. V. L. on the Rose) has the above disposition with one unison on a dogleg, a fifth register. Furthermore late Flemish instruments often have hardwood cases. We have provided a valid, alternative disposition for the instrument in question. Now it should be obvious that my argument is not a "proof." It simply reduces further than Kirkpatrick the chances that Scarlatti had a 16' available to himself. Since the Queen's collection contained at least one, and possibly three other Flemish instruments, the possibility of a 16' stop at the Spanish court would seem to approach the vanishing point. Pablo Nassare, writing at Zaragoza, Spain, in 1724, does not mention the 16' stop as a possibility, although the 8' and 4' are both discussed. So much for Miss Jones' imagination.

Perhaps the key to the problem lies in the statement by Miss Jones that Scarlatti was "raised in the Italian school and left it all behind to go to Spain." Even if one can believe that a forty year old man can wipe out his past life and experiences, a rudimentary knowledge of Baroque music would remind one that if there was an "international" school during that time, it was that of the Italians. The Italian singer Farinelli was on the court staff along with Scarlatti. The court opera was dominated by Italian composers and performers. The Spanish court possessed a fine set of instruments by Stradivarius. The majority of the Queen's keyboard instruments were of Italian origin. If we are to believe the available evidence, Spanish harpsichords share a common basis with those of Italy. Gilbert Chase, in his book on Spanish music, tells us that the Spanish court was

"infested with Italian favorites." (p. 106) Scarlatti's musical style, despite some occasional Spanish borrowings, is essentially Italian and personal.

The attack on Kirkpatrick as a performer is almost below mention. We are told that he does not play Scarlatti 'as fast as written.' What does this mean? Is Miss Jones laboring under the misapprehension that we have (or she has) precise knowledge of Scarlatti's own tempos? Does she perhaps confuse tempo with style? Later she implies that Kirkpatrick simply "can not play them that well . . ." Does speed imply quality? At one point she seems to think him to be dull and illogical. At another he is compared to Bruno Walter! Structure, harmony and phrasing are relegated to limbo. Such judgements are meaningless.

Kirkpatrick does not need any meager defense. Doubtless his former student Valenti (in whose recordings Miss Jones revels) is more capable of this than I. Normally I would simply ignore such a bad piece of misinformation. Unfortunately it appears in a source which is relevant and accurate. When mistakes have been made they have been corrected. Past interviews have at the least been interesting, and at best, outstanding. This one features an individual who, at best, is insensitive and uninformed.

James S. Upton, Ph. D

Associate Professor of Music

University of Northern Colorado

Dear Sir:

Especially delightful to me was your article on Dominique Jones whose lovely face seems to portray a true image of her very keen and sensitive mind. There is no ear so sensitive that cannot become more so with training and practice. We really hear with our minds and fortunate is he who can so develop a sense of beauty that comes ever closer to grasping reality in a cosmic sense. I had the same feeling about Valenti and his Scarlatti that she did.

Mr. E. L. Schellens,
Essex, Conn.

Dear Sir:

Your interviews frequently annoy me with their effusive quality, but as a professional harpsichordist with a strong feeling of responsibility to my instrument, I can not allow the Dominique Jones interview in your latest issue (Vol. V, No. 4) pass by without comment.

Words scarcely express my fury at the obsequiousness demonstrated by your magazine toward a young woman whose entire authority is based on her possession of a vast library of materials which she has chosen to ignore. You do no service to amateur or professional when you espouse in your magazine such standards of petty dilettantism.

I feel quite sure that there must be professional people with at least some might who would be happy to contribute their ideas to your enterprise. Two opposite personalities present themselves immediately to me — Alan Curtis of U. C. Berkeley, who is an authority on Frescobaldi and Sweelinck and Silvia Kind, of the University of Washington in Seattle, who is a first-rate performer with a gut-level orientation.

If you are incapable of making such distinctions in quality level, perhaps, you should abandon the Conversation, and replace it with a much needed report of new books and music of particular interest.

Kathleen McIntosh Farr
Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Mr. Haney:

Great gal — Dominique Jones! I guess we all tend to admire people who share our opinions and interests. I'm sure there will be a lot of static generated by some of her remarks, and I hope you print this (she probably does, too) as there is nothing more stimulating than good arguments.

How very long it has been since I ran into someone whose enthusiasm for Scarlatti and Valenti matched mine — and who would admit to an indifference toward the French music and instruments (it just isn't done!) — but I hope she gives Fuller credit

in this — his specialty. I'll leave the flowers, charity work and 100 yard dash to Dominique (replaced by dogs, church interests and knittery) but you now know two 89 pound cookie bakers.

Mary Boutillier
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Haney:

Your delightful magazine pleases all my students as well as me.

The interview with Dominique Jones was priceless. Such singleninded devotion, so vividly expressed, is rare today — and refreshing.

Marjorie Rohlfleisch
La Mesa, California

Dear Sir:

The conversation with Dominique Jones started a series of discussions with my musical friends here in New York that hasn't stopped yet! I very much like reading about the professionals, but it is refreshing to know you listen to us non-professionals as well. I did not agree with all Miss Jones had to say but what the heck, that's what makes the world go around. She expressed herself with enthusiasm and conviction that was admirable. I must admit the article came as a surprise, but it was a pleasant one.

John B. Rothframe
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Haney:

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The seminar begins with a Brueggen-Curtis Concert on March 23rd, and concludes with the participants' concert on March 31. The fee for the entire series (including concerts) is: Participants, \$150; Auditors, \$75. For further information write: Brueggen-Curtis Master Class, 2130 Carleton St., Berkeley, California 94704.

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